SCRIPT BITS!
Issue: Sonic the Hedgehog #169 (NOV'06 – First of a double-month)
Lead Story Pages: p. 2-3, 9-10, 12-13
Back-up Story Pages: p. 4-7

Welcome one and all to **Script Bits!** This monthly feature will take roughly forty-five percent of a story in Archie Comic's *Sonic the Hedgehog* and present it to you as insight into the writing process.

Part of the fun of this feature will be comparing what was written and what saw print. Sometimes the vision is tweaked as the artists interpret the script. Sometimes the original idea doesn't work once put on paper and must be adjusted from there. Sometimes the artist has a stroke of genius and does something different than what the script calls for - and it's for the better!

So pull out your copy of *Sonic the Hedgehog* #169 from November of 2006 and get ready to read along!

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Remembering "The Great Harmony"

Last issue set up quite the challenge for our heroes. Tails is kidnapped, Shadow defeated, Eggman dethroned, the Chaos Emeralds from all over Creation are in the hands of a murderous intelligence, Sonic's friend is being used by said murderous intelligence, and we open with Sonic finding his dad presumably on death's door. How's *that* for an opening hook?

Right out of the gate we have a little bit of character investigation. One could argue that Sonic's daring persona was developed by a lifetime of battle and being so naturally powerful. I like to think we're all the product of both a little "nature" and a little "nurture," so I'd like to see his personality somewhere in his family. Uncle Chuck is jolly and, to a degree, nerdy, so that's not it. Bernadette has shown courage and an adventurous spirit, so we get a piece there. Jules, who to me always seemed so dour and depressed, would be an odd place to find Sonic's wit. Being both the first and last Robian could put a dampening on the spirits, so we can forgive Jules on that account. Part of Jules's moment where he thinks around A.D.A.M.'s death sentence was a small effort to show that – like father, like son – Jules could think fast.

We move on to the big moment I'd been wanting to writer forever: the Great Harmony, or, in non-canonical terms, correcting the Chaos Emeralds. As A.D.A.M. lists off all their appearances, I was almost coming up with it on the fly. Before writing this I hadn't considered where from space the gems would come from. Karl Bollers gave me the set-up from his "Tossed in Space" arc, and opened the door to my plans when he

revealed the Red Chaos Emeralds on Thoraxia. The only planet I didn't take from that arc was Weeet, which was a throw-back to the oldest fans. That, and Car'heem was my most favorite pun from the series. It's so atrociously wonderful!

Something that occurred to me when writing the breakdowns, however, was I hadn't accounted for the biggest of them all: the Master Emerald. This played into my hands in that it allowed me to hint at Dr. Finitevus's powers and plans. It threw a monkey-wrench into my grand scheme o' things since Dr. Finitevus and Locke were supposed to meet for the first time in "Enforcers," which ran two issues later. Thus, Doc Fin and Locke had their dialogue purposefully crafted to fill in this problem in the later story.

Once Sonic arrives on the scene we get the all-out, big-budget-blockbuster moment of the book. We get a brief look at Tommy during the initial fight to remind us there's somebody in there Sonic is fighting for. We get Super Sonic – the true Super Sonic – for the first time since the Sonic Adventure adaptation.

In the original pitch for the story, A.D.A.M. was to have possessed a Metal Sonic Trooper (Neo Metal Sonic in the SegaSonic) and transform into Metal Overlord. Obviously that wasn't an option now. So instead we get Super A.D.A.M.-Tommy with vaguely Super Sonic-like spines (to denote the power and emulation) and big, golden wings (because wings are cool).

If I'd had another page or two to play with, I would've loved to have had the Supers go into an epic struggle. Their blows would sound like thunder and the lightest of grappling would level buildings. Unfortunately I was running out of pages and I still had thousands of infinitely-powerful gemstones to take care of.

Enter Super Shadow and Turbo Tails. The very reason A.D.A.M. needed them last month was the key to resolving the current problem. Super Shadows opens the door to the Zone of Silence and Turbo Tails "unifies the chaos" as was foretold in his mini-series years ago. The Chaos Emeralds are removed from the universe. You can't get much more harmonious than that. Turbo Tails's final line on page ten was also a hint to the close-readers of what was to come. I'm happy some folks got the reference to the Special Zone from that.

And now we come to the big moment the fandom seemed united over. SegaSonic or ArchieSonic, current comic continuity or SatAM, veteran or newbie – everybody wanted Tommy dead and I was more than happy to oblige.

But before I heat up some turtle soup Eggman-style, I wanted to redeem Tommy, or get as close as I could. Tommy's first story was one of the best the comic has seen and really did him justice. Tommy's big moment here is both a return to his initial appearance and a nod to the fans.

And then I blow him up with the entire Egg Fleet.

No clones, no last-second-rescue, no leaving to possibly return one day. The little fink is atomized and we're done with him.

The art team did a phenomenal job with capturing the power of the moment. From Tracy Yardley's animated style to the fade into the sunset provided by Mr. Jensen we get the bitter victory.

Easter Eggs

- In case you missed it last time, check out the focusing spire. Tracy added a *Back to the Future* flux capacitor to the machine.
- As stated earlier, Super A.D.A.M.-Tommy's helmet was supposed to be reminiscent of Super Sonic's spines.
- When we see the Silver Chaos Emeralds leaving Argentum, you can see the Black Comet – homeworld and transport of the Black Arms – just beyond the wheel-world.

PAGE TWO

PANEL 1 - High-atmosphere shot of MOBIUS. The green lands and blue oceans barely betray the curve of the planet. The darkness of space is *just* visible above the clouds. Fit as many GREEN CHAOS EMERALDS as you can streaking from right to left over the planet/within the atmosphere. We can make out the distant form of the SPIRE from last issue on the left.

TEXT BOX (green - ADAM/TOMMY)
My device is summoning every **green** Chaos Emerald from around Mobius . . .

PANEL 2 - Planet WEET. We see a handful of giant, mechanical people modeled off of CAR HEEM (see S#23) The giants look up in surprise as dozens of CYAN CHAOS EMERALDS rise past them like rain in reverse.

TEXT BOX (green - ADAM/TOMMY)
. . . the **cyan** Chaos Emeralds from the planet Weet . . .*

EDITO'S NOTE
*who remembers Car Heem from classic S#23?

PANEL 3 - Planet XORDA. We're under the global ocean. A pair of Xorda (see S#124) dart out of the way as scores of BLUE CHAOS EMERALDS rush upwards like a massive school of fish.

TEXT BOX (green - ADAM/TOMMY)
. . . and the **blue** Chaos Emeralds from Planet Xorda.**

EDITOR'S NOTE
**warmongering, Mobius-hating aliens of S#124

PANEL 4 - Extreme lose-up shot of ADAM/TOMMY's face (see previous issue). The narrowed eyes should scare us.

ADAM/TOMMY (square, green balloon)
How do I know all this?

I am bound to the summoning spire.
The emeralds are **telling me.**

PAGE THREE

PANEL 1 - Thoraxia (see S#126) The ant-like Thoraxians (again, see S#126) run in terror as RED CHAOS EMERALDS streak across the sky.

TEXT BOX (green - ADAM/TOMMY)
They tell me the **red** Chaos Emeralds hail from Thoraxia . . .*

EDITOR'S NOTE
*Aliens rescued by Sonic in S#126

PANEL 2 - An asteroid field. PURPLE CHAOS EMERALDS glint and streak through/among the great stones.

TEXT BOX (green - ADAM/TOMMY)
. . . the **purple** from the remains of Teragosa 6 . . .**

EDITOR'S NOTE
**which Sonic found destroyed in S#128

PANEL 3 - A sun/star burns brightly, but its corona-ring is much further out from the star itself. A long tendril of YELLOW CHAOS EMERALDS pulls from the star.

TEXT BOX (green - ADAM/TOMMY)
. . .The star that consumed E.V.E. goes dark as its fuel - the **yellow** Chaos Emeralds - are pulled away . . .***

EDITOR'S NOTE
***back in S#128

PANEL 4 - Distant shot of the ring-world ARGENTUM (see S#129) Nearby, we should see an asteroid that is bulbous at one end and tapers to a point at the other. (This is setting things up for way down the line, so please include it). A stream of GREY CHAOS EMERALDS come from the ring-world.

TEXT BOX (green - ADAM/TOMMY)
. . . and the **grey** Chaos Emeralds leave their resting places on Argentum.***

EDITOR'S NOTE
***where Sonic found Tails' parents in S#129

PAGE NINE

PANEL 1 - Narrow panel that caps the top of the page, only half the page long. We see EGGMAN's hands throw the glass door to SUPER SHADOW's booth wide open. SUPER SHADOW groggily awakes.

EGGMAN (unseen)
Wake up!

PANEL 2 - Narrow panel that caps the top of the page and is opposite the previous panel. We see EGGMAN's hands throw the glass door to TURBO TAILS's booth wide open. TURBO TAILS groggily awakes.

EGGMAN (unseen)
Get out!

PANEL 3 - SUPER SHADOW and TURBO TAILS look skyward. We see SUPER ADAM/TOMMY and SUPER SONIC rush towards each other and collide in a flash of gold light. EGGMAN points up at SUPER ADAM/TOMMY and SUPER SONIC.

EGGMAN
A.D.A.M. has gained super-level power!
Super Sonic can't take him alone, much less my Egg Fleet!
You two have to do something!

TURBO TAILS
Yes . . .

PANEL 4 - TURBO TAILS turns to SUPER SHADOW. I'm a sucker for capes, so please have TURBO TAILS's cape drape dramatically over his shoulders. TURBO TAILS is grim but serene. SUPER SHADOW scowls as he usually does.

TURBO TAILS
. . . I know what must be done.
Super Shadow, will you please help me?

SUPER SHADOW
Of course.
What do you have in mind?

PANEL 5 - Aerial view of the spire. Looking down, we can see most of the interior rainbow-tunnel made by the rings. SUPER SHADOW and TURBO TAILS fly up towards us.

TURBO TAILS
That much power cannot exist here.

We must send it to a safe place.

PAGE TEN

PANEL 1 - SUPER SHADOW and TURBO TAILS hover side-by-side. SUPER SHADOW claps his hands together and they ignite in green, fiery energy.

TURBO TAILS
Can you open a portal to the nearest zone?
Not another dimension entirely, but . . .

SUPER SHADOW
I understand.
CHAOS . . .

PANEL 2 - We are behind SUPER SHADOW and TURBO TAILS. They are right at the tip of the spire, and we can see the top of the ring of RED CHAOS EMERALDS. A round hole opens in the sky, its edges burning with fiery, green energy. SUPER SHADOW spreads his arms apart, both hands trailing fiery, green energy as well.

SUPER SHADOW (burst ballon)
. . . CONTROL!

TURBO TAILS
The Zone of Silence.
Why do we always end up with the Zone of Silence?

PANEL 3 - SUPER SHADOW grimaces, arms still spread wide. TURBO TAILS raise his own hands, Dr. Strange-style (pinky, index and thumb raised). TURBO TAILS's hands are enveloped in balls of green energy.

SUPER SHADOW
This isn't easy.
What's next?

TURBO TAILS
I fulfill the prophecy I thought I'd already finished.*
This is the beginning of the Great Harmony . . .

EDITOR'S NOTE
*when Tails fought Mogul in S#150

PANEL 4 - Same layout as PANEL 2. TURBO TAILS also has his arms raised, his hands in bubbles of green energy. This is where I ask you to break your hand: as

many CHAOS EMERALDS as you can draw (of all seven colors) go spiraling into the sky-hole.

TURBO TAILS
. . . where all the Chaos Emeralds are unified.

PANEL 5 - Narrow panel to cap the end of the page. Extreme close-up on SUPER SHADOW and TURBO TAILS's furrowed brows and grimaces of concentration.

SUPER SHADOW
What will happen with all that energy in such an unstable zone?

TURBO TAILS
Something **special,** I hope.

PAGE TWELVE

PANEL 1 - TOMMY hangs his head in shame. SUPER SONIC looks sympathetic. Leave room for lots of talking, please.

TOMMY
I'm sorry for everything, really.
I'm sorry I've been such a pain.
I'm sorry for all the trouble I've dragged you into.
And I'm **especially** sorry for letting A.D.A.M. do this to everyone.

SUPER SONIC
Dude, it's cool.
You're in control now, so . . .

PANEL 2 - TOMMY looks determined. Frightened, but determined. SUPER SONIC balks and recoils.

TOMMY
No, I'm not.
A.D.A.M. will win back control any minute now, and I won't be able to get it back.
A.D.A.M. must be destroyed so that everyone will be cured of their nanite infections.
I'm sorry Sonic . . .

PANEL 3 - TOMMY soars towards the EGG FLEET with a bitter-sweet smile. SUPER SONIC flies right behind him, panicked.

TOMMY
. . . you gave me a second chance in life.*

It’s time I repaid that debt!

SUPER SONIC
TOMMY!!!
NO!!!

EDITOR'S NOTE
*from the Auto-Automations in S#137

PANEL 4 - Back on the ground. EGGMAN takes the foreground and clenches his fist in the air, screaming in wicked delight. In the background, we can see TAILS horrified and SHADOW frowning deeply.

EGGMAN
Dr. Eggman to Egg Fleet!
All canons - (burst balloon) **FIRE!!!**

PAGE THIRTEEN

PANEL 1 - We see winged ADAM/TOMMY and SUPER SONIC in silhouette. The rest of the panel is awash with fiery yellow/orange light.

SFX (ambient - huge)
KRA-KOOM!!!

SUPER SONIC (burst balloon)
TOMMY!!!

PANEL 2 - SUPER SONIC hangs in the air with smoke trailing from his spines. He is devastated. A very fine dust trails from his hands.

SUPER SONIC (tiny text, large balloon)
. . . Tommy . . .

PANEL 3 - EGGMAN, SHADOW and TAILS all look skyward. SHADOW's expression hasn't changed. TAILS is freely shedding tears. EGGMAN looks angry.

EGGMAN
(small - an aside) So much for family.
What a colossal waste of time.
And I missed out on a literal ton of Chaos Emeralds.

PANEL 4 - SHADOW and EGGMAN walk away. TAILS still stands there, watching the sky, crying.

EGGMAN

Come along, Shadow.
We're done here.

Remembering "For My Friend"

The initial premise for this story was simple: a Chaotix action story. Espio's ninja prowess made for a good source of action. Now we needed a reason. A SegaSonic element of old was Espio being somewhat prickly to everyone but Charmy. This was the initial spark that eventually sent Espio to wrap up the plot point of the Golden Hive Colony.

What wasn't initially intended was another bit of a character study. The stammering guard Egg Pawn and the bored one at the computer were fun elements and added a little interest to what would otherwise be a cakewalk through drones. It had precedent with the badniks of old. It still left the question of why Dr. Eggman would program fear, cowardice and other emotional weaknesses into his minions. Espio and Nicole answer this for us.

Espio also was given a bit of an edge in this story. The "grim ninja" persona is a stark change from when he was bullied around by Robian Valdez years ago. The deft avoidance of the Egg Pawns is one thing, but the ruthless destruction of the Golden Hive (or Egg Hive by this point) shows us Espio has changed.

Easter Eggs

- In the original script, Nicole's face was meant only to be an icon and thus more of an easter egg.
- The Egg Pawn is doing what anyone bored in an office job has done: playing solitaire.
- Mighty and Ray wait in a saucer just like those used in STH#152, which in turn appear to have been adapted/copied from Dark Legion technology. Oh sweet irony!

PAGE FOUR

PANEL ONE - We are inside the dark computer room. A single, massive machine runs at the end of the hangar-sized room. The screen takes up most of the space. A lone EGG PAWN sits in an office chair. The screen shows us he's playing solitair. Inside-joke/Sega cameos on the cards are highly encouraged! In extreme foreground, we see ESPIO's hand holding another over-sized throwing star.

PANEL TWO - We're sitting on the keyboard and watching the EGG PAWN. It is boredly resting its head on one hand while the other operates the mouse.

PANEL THREE - Same layout as the previous panel. ESPIO materializes right next to the EGG PAWN, smiling in a delightfully sinister fashion as he leans over the robot's shoulder. The EGG PAWN doesn't change other than it goes wide-eyed.

ESPIO

Black five on the red six.

PANEL FOUR - Page-width, extremely narrow panel. We get a number of criss-crossing, silvery, almost luminous wedges.

SFX (along each wedge)
SCHING!

PANEL FIVE - ESPIO hooks a wire into the computer while holding an over-sized throwing star in his other hand. The wire runs back up to NICOLE, which sits on the keyboard. We see a number of sliced segments of the EGG PAWN laying on the floor, the few exposed wires sparking a little.

ESPIO
You're online, Nicole.

NICOLE (square bubble with static tail)
Thank you, Espio.
I am hacking the system now.

<u>PAGE FIVE</u>

PANEL ONE - ESPIO looks down at the remains of the EGG PAWN. He arches an eyebrow, curious. The light of the screen makes for some spooky lighting.

ESPIO
Why would Dr. Robotnik program his machines to show fear?
It serves no purpose.

PANEL TWO - The computer screen is now blue and blank except for the progress bar. The surrounding graphic reads "PROGRESS . . ." and shows the bar. On the left, the bar steadily fills green and is marked with an icon that resembles the head of the LIVING NICOLE (see S#151). The right of the bar (which is diminishing) is red and marked with the Eggman Empire insignia. We can see the same thing on NICOLE's screen as she sits on the keyboard.

NICOLE (square bubble with static tail)
I disagree.
Dr. Robotnik thrives on the misery of others.
Without Snively or any family, I hypothesize he fills the void in his life with robots.

PANEL THREE - ESPIO crosses his arms and looks up at the screen, frowning. NICOLE is visible, her "back" to us.

ESPIO
I would argue, but this is the Eggman we're talking about.
Does waxing philosophically slow down your hacking?

NICOLE (square bubble with static tail)
Yes, but it is a moot point.
I'm in.

ESPIO
Then let's see what happened to Charmy's family and kingdom.

PAGE SIX

PANEL ONE - ESPIO leans on the keyboard, frowning. NICOLE's screen glows softly beside him.

NICOLE (square bubble with static tail)
There are no records on numbers captured or otherwise.

ESPIO
So he doesn't care about how many lives he ruins.

PANEL TWO - ESPIO's look darkens into a glare and a sneer. No change in layout.

NICOLE (square bubble with static tail)
Not in the way we would.
I've found a great deal of video and images files of the invasion.
He does seem to care about the terror he brought.

PANEL THREE - ESPIO bows his head and makes fists on the keyboard, barely restraining his fury. NICOLE keeps on being NICOLE. Same layout as previous.

NICOLE
It appears the kingdom scattered, Espio.
Anyone who wasn't captured fled in all directions.
All of the kingdom's holdings and structures have been converted to serve Dr. Robotnik.
I'm afraid the Golden Hive Colony is gone.

PANEL FOUR - Straight-on shot of ESPIO's face. He is livid but under control.

ESPIO
Then Eggman won't have it either.

PAGE SEVEN

PANEL ONE - ESPIO looks sternly at NICOLE's screen.

NICOLE (square bubble with static tail)
I do not understand.

ESPIO
Can you access the controls to the power matrix?

NICOLE (square bubble with static tail)
Yes.

ESPIO
Set it to overload.
Disable all warning sensors.
Lock-down the complex except for our escape route.

PANEL TWO - Side-on view of ESPIO staring NICOLE down. Yes, he's giving the evil eye to a computer, but we don't think of her as a computer.

NICOLE (square bubble with static tail)
I do not believe the others would approve of such drastic measures.

ESPIO
We're not doing this for them.
We're doing it for Charmy.

PANEL THREE - ESPIO straps NICOLE back on, a hand on her top half as he closes her.

NICOLE (square bubble with static tail)
Detonation in three minutes.
I would like to advise against this one more - -

ESPIO
Duly noted.

PANEL FOUR - Small panel. ESPIO throws his over-sized throwing star up at the ceiling. We're on his level and watch as he throws.

PANEL FIVE - Small panel. The throwing star shatters an air vent in the ceiling.

PANEL SIX - Small panel. ESPIO shoots his tongue into the now open vent.

PANEL SEVEN - Small panel. ESPIO zips up towards the vent on his tongue.